

STRICTURES

ON THE

Rev. STEPHEN ADDINGTON'S

L A T E

S U M M A R Y

OF THE

CHRISTIAN MINISTER'S

R E A S O N S

F O R

BAPTIZING INFANTS,

A N D F O R

ADMINISTERING THE ORDINANCE BY
SPRINKLING OR POURING OF WATER.

IN TWO LETTERS TO THE AUTHOR.

By D A N T A Y L O R.

*Beware lest any Man spoil you, through Philosophy, and
vain Deceit, after the Tradition of Men, after the Ru-
diments of the World, and not after Christ. COL. ii. 8.*

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S T R I C T U R E S

ON THE

Rev. Mr. *Addington's* Summary, &c.

L E T T E R I.

Reverend SIR,

AS my *Essay on Baptism* is now a second time in the press, notwithstanding my settled aversion to controversy, I have so far yielded to the sollicitations of those I ought to respect, as to present you with a few strictures on your late *Summary*. I hope you will read them with candor, and if they, in connection with what my *Essay* contains, shall give any light to the subject in debate, I trust you will make that use of it which may naturally be expected from a serious upright minister of Jesus Christ, who desires to “*ap-
prove himself to God*” as such, and who is earnestly intent upon “*keeping the or-
dinances*”

"dinances as they are delivered unto us" in the word of truth.

Your former publication, intituled, "The Christian Minister's Reasons, &c." was put into my hands; soon after its appearance, with an earnest request that I would make some remarks upon it. But my great disinclination to dispute, my various avocations, and my hopes that it would be undertaken by some abler hand, appeared sufficient reasons for refusing compliance with that request. Compliance therefore I did refuse. But I rejoice to see that the task has been undertaken, and nobly executed, by the good Dr. Stennett. His work, however, though in my opinion excellent, is too large for the lower class of readers. If the *Humble Essay*, with the few following remarks, should be thought in any degree worthy to supply his lack of service for the lowest of the people, to prevent the pernicious consequences which I am fully persuaded your late performances are calculated to produce, I shall think myself happy in having presented them to the world. I should be very sorry, my good Sir, to give you any reasonable cause of disgust; yet I hope you will please to excuse it if I do not fill my paper with superfluous compliments. You are, for what I know, an useful minister; but you need not be reminded that you are capable of being mistaken. And mistaken I am persuaded you are, and that in a matter of considerable moment. My reason

reason for this persuasion will be learnt from my *Humble Essay*, and from the ensuing remarks on your *Summary*.

To me I confess there appears something singular, and very defective in your description of Christian Baptism. "It is an ordinance in which water is administered, &c." I beg you would favor us with an explication of it—a proof of its propriety—and a demonstration that this is an adequate account of the ordinance. I, at present, take it for granted, as a matter that has often been fully proved, that baptism is immersion, and that *Christian* Baptism is the immersion of that person in water, who gives credible evidence that he believes in Jesus Christ*. You inform us, "it signifies the putting on of Christ—and spiritual purity, &c." But these expressions again are vague and indeterminate. Do you mean that the ordinance, or the minister, or parent, signifies herein to the child, that he has put on Christ, or ought to put him on? That he is, or ought to be thus spiritually pure? How can this be done to an infant? Do you mean that the person baptized signifies that he has put on Christ, and is spiritually pure? Neither can this be applicable to infants. The passages you refer

* See Dr. Stennett's Letters on Baptism, Vol. 1. N. 2. 4. and *Humble Essay* on Christian Baptism, 2d Edit. P. 1—17.

to have plainly this latter sense*, and consequently they most evidently oppose the practice of *infant baptism*.

“ By baptism,” you tell us, “ those who have been baptized are avowed the nominal disciples of Christ.” Pray, good Sir, who avows infants the nominal disciples of Christ by baptism? Do ministers? Do parents? By what authority? Please to inform us, with proper evidence, wherein a baptized infant is a disciple of Christ, either nominal or real, more than one who is unbaptized. “ The ordinance,” you say, “ is a sign of internal sanctification, and is intended to remind us of the necessity of it.” But if we admit this, baptism cannot answer these purposes to infants. They can have no idea of a sign. They are not possessed of internal sanctification; nor are they capable of being reminded how necessary it is. But, admitting the justness of your account of baptism, it is obvious there is a peculiar propriety in administering the ordinance to believers.

We have the happiness of agreeing with you, Sir, that baptism is a “ standing ordinance, and ought to “ be continued throughout all “ ages;†” but cannot so cordially assent that it signifies “ the influences of the Spirit,” or is designed for that end, unless you can shew us where this is written in the scriptures. In

* Gal. iii. 27. 1 Cor. xii. 13. † Summary, p. 6.
the

the same page you tell your reader that those who administer baptism by plunging, "generally confine it to adults." Ought you not rather to have said, to those who appear to repent, and believe in Jesus? For you know we are not concerned about the age, but the spiritual state of those we baptize.

You say truly that "the Scripture expressly declares, there is but one baptism;" and your inference from this apostolic position is also true, that "the second washing of a person who has been once baptized, can by no means be properly called baptism." (I suppose you mean Christian baptism). If it can be proved that the sprinkling of an infant's face with water is proper Christian baptism, it is certainly wrong to baptize them again. But I never yet saw this proved, nor ever expect to see it proved. On the contrary, if it be evident that the only baptism authorized in Scripture, is the immersion of believers in water, it must follow from your own reasoning, and it is a manifest truth, that the sprinkling of infants is not proper Christian baptism.

You suppose it improbable that our Lord should impose the practice of immersion on his disciples, because of the indecency, burdensomeness, frightfulness, and hurtfulness of it. But, surely, Sir, you cannot be so much a stranger to mankind, as not to know that cold bathing is now become so common, so much applauded, and so generally beneficial,

that all your prudent and thoughtful readers, will require some evidence of what you here insinuate, before they can possibly believe that there is any thing "indecent, burthen-
"some, terrifying, or hurtful" in the practice against which you militate*.

You next would persuade your readers that the word βαπτίζω does not signify to *dip* or *plunge*, though that this is it's proper import, has been so often fully shewn by some, and confessed by others, even of the Pœdobaptists themselves; yea, though the best critics generally give this sense of it; though the best ancient Greek writers constantly used the word in this sense, and though no man can produce a fair evidence of this idea being excluded from it, in one single instance in their writings†. In order, however, to accomplish your design, you refer to three places of Scripture‡. With what success, a little close

* "The usual methods of baptizing by immersion
"might not, perhaps, 1800 years ago, be offensive in
"Judea, nor can we say that it would disgust the un-
"cultivated and unclothed inhabitants of the South of
"Africa even now." Mr. Addington's Christian Minister's Reasons, &c. p. 13. "If Mr. A. had ever been
"at Bath, Southampton, &c. he would have known,
"that for men and women properly clothed, to bathe
"promiscuously, and in public, is not considered as
"indecent, by people in general, in this island." Dr. Stenner's Answer, vol. 1. p. 31, 32.

† See this proved at large by Dr. Gale. Remarks on Wall, letter III, &c.

‡ Dan. v. 21. 1 Cor. x. 2. Heb. ix. 10.

attention

attention will discover. You first mention the case of Nebuchadnezzar, *Dan. v. 21*. He, you inform us, when sprinkled with the dew of Heaven, is said (in the Greek translation) to have been baptized by it*? But where is the proof, Sir, that our English word *wet*, or the Greek word βαπτειν is designed to represent the *descent* of the dew? The text itself has nothing like it. Rather the word describes the state of Nebuchadnezzar's body, who, by lying abroad in the open air, was, as it were, immersed in the dew. To demonstrate the propriety of this application of the word, and interpretation of the text, I ask leave to propose the following queries. It is not well known, by every person of sense and learning, that in the countries where Nebuchadnezzar's dominions lay, and in all countries in the same latitude, the dews are very abundant? God has wisely and graciously so ordered it, as a supply of moisture to those hot countries; and by which they are remarkably fertile. It is not evident, that as Nebuchadnezzar laid abroad with the beasts in the open fields, he would hereby be very *wet* as if he had been immersed in water? Would it not have been very low, and have greatly enfeebled the strong and picturesque language made use of in this description, if the Prophet had only meant to tell us that the dew *sprinkled* Nebuchadnezzar?

zar? Is it not reasonable to imagine that in such a description as this, the inspired penman would use such a word that most naturally conveyed the idea of that remarkable quantity of dew with which Nebuchadnezzar's body was wet? Could any word more naturally convey this idea than one which denoted immersion? Can any words be produced which more strongly and more naturally convey the idea of immersion, than the Chaldee word צָמַח, and the Greek word ἑλκεσθαι, here used by the Prophet Daniel, and the seventy? Will any man deny, that the Chaldee word here used by Daniel properly conveys the idea of immersion? Is it reasonable to suppose that the seventy did not understand the import of this Chaldee word? Must we not then suppose that they have translated it by a Greek word of like import? Is it not evident therefore, to any upright and candid reader, that this text is so far from affording an argument to prove that baptism may be administered by sprinkling, that it very clearly proves the contrary?—Concerning the Israelites, you say that “sprinkled by the fall of rain from the clouds, and the dashing of the waves, &c.” they “are said to have been baptized unto Moses.” But pray, Sir, where did you obtain this extraordinary intelligence, that they were thus sprinkled by the fall of rain. When your authority for this assertion is produced, what you say may be attended

attended to. 'Till then I leave it with the impartial reader, for the sake of brevity*, and pass on.

That the various washings or baptisms of the Jews, mentioned *Heb.* ix. 10. were "many," or any of them, "performed by sprinkling," is equally destitute of proof, and cannot rationally be admitted. Not one of your readers can find any evidence of it in the passages from which you say "it appears†."

"It has been thought by some, that John "baptized our Lord, and others, and that Philip "baptized the Eunuch in this way," (*i.e.* by immersion). This, Sir, is a great truth. It has been thought so by *some*; or rather many; all Christians, except a very few of late, have been fully assured of it‡. No man who has not arrived at an extraordinary degree of effrontery can deny that baptism was administered "in this way," in the first age, and many ages after. If there be any faith in history, any meaning in words, or any method of understanding the plainest and simplest narrations that ever were penned, this was certainly the case. "The very word "baptize signifies to dip; and it is *certain* "that the rite of dipping was observed of

* See *Exod.* xiv. 19—23. and *Humble Essay*, p. 17.

† "It appears," Mr. A. says, "from *Lev.* viii. xi. xiv. 14 first verses, and other places, p. 8.

‡ See *Humble Essay*.

“ the ancient church*.” “ Baptism was wont
 “ to be administered in the time of Christ
 “ and his Apostles, not by sprinkling but by
 “ immersion†.” There is no room for *think-
 ing* in the case, Sir; it is as certain that bap-
 tism was thus administered in the apostolic
 and many following ages, by the Christian
 church in general, as it is certain that it ever
 were administered at all.

“ The force of the argument, taken from
 “ the expression of his baptizing in Jordan,
 “ depends entirely on our English transla-
 “ tion of the Greek preposition‡.”—No, Sir,
 not *entirely*; but on what every one will al-
 low to be the *natural signification* of that pre-
 position, in such a *connection*, together with
 the proper sense of the word *baptize*. I be-
 lieve yourself will not pretend, nor any man
 else, that the Greek words do not fairly and
 naturally signify, that they *were baptized in
 the water*; nor will you pretend to find any
 other preposition in the Greek tongue that
 more naturally and more evidently conveys
 this idea. This interpretation therefore
 being confirmed by the native and genuine
 import of the word βαπτίζω, and by many
 clear historical facts, related in the New
 Testament, with the greatest simplicity, must
 be a sufficient warrant for the Baptists and
 for every man to assert, that John plunged
 our Lord and others in the river Jordan.

* Calvin.

† Mastricht.

‡ Page 9.

That preposition, you tell us, " might properly have been rendered at Jordan," Suppose we admit this with respect to *εν*, can you, Sir, furnish us with clear proof that *εἰς τὸν Ἰορδάνην* *, may properly be rendered at Jordan?—" Though he," (John), " took his disciples to the river, it is no where said that he plunged any of them in it." Yes, Sir; when it is said he *baptized* them in it. For " it is acknowledged by all the world, that to *baptize*, signifies to *plunge* †." " Baptism is *immersion*, and was formerly celebrated according to the force and meaning of that word †." " The word *baptize* signifies to *dip* †." " It properly denotes *immersion* for the sake of dipping §." " The propriety of the word, as well as the places chosen for the administration of the ordinance, and the many allusions of the Apostles to it, which cannot be referred to sprinkling, shews that it was the custom to administer it by *plunging*, and not by pouring of water **." " The manner of baptizing was to plunge, or dip into the water, as even the word βαπτίζω itself plainly enough shews ††."—In short, if words have any determinate ideas included in them, it is so evident that John *plunged* his Disciples, that it will not admit of a fair dispute.

* Mark i. 9. † Bp. Bossuet. † Salmasius.
 † Calvin. § Beza. ** Grotius. †† Casaubon.

You strangely mistake yourself respecting the Jewish priest, *Lev. xiv. 4—8.* who, you say, “ was ordered to take the leprous to a “ running water, only to sprinkle the water “ upon them.” The bird was to be killed over the running water, and the man to wash himself in it.—As to your conjecture with regard to those whom John baptized in Jordan and Enon, it is too fanciful to deserve a reply.—Your play upon the Greek preposition *απο* * can never serve your purpose, unless you can prove that baptism is not immersion, and that this preposition does not naturally denote our Lord’s coming *out of* the water, and that *εἰς*, in *Mark i. 9.* does not properly signify *into*; which it is certain you will never be able to do, nor any man else.

Are you not very conscious, Sir, of misrepresentation, or great inattention, in the case of Philip and the Eunuch? Do the Baptists say, that “ he must have been immersed in the “ water, because it is said he went into it, “ and came out of it?” I hope not. Surely they have sense enough to know that a man may go into the water, and come out of it, and not be immersed in it. Rather they say, because both Philip and the Eunuch went into the water, and then, when they were both in it, Philip baptized the Eunuch. The word baptize signifies *immerse*; and if Philip only sprinkled the Eunuch, why should they both have the trouble of going into the water,

when it might have been as easily, and much more conveniently performed, without it? But—"what is said of one, is said of both; "they, (the expressions) assert the immersion of both, or of neither."—How, Sir? do they assert that the Eunuch baptized Philip, after they were both gone down into the water*? Do they not assert, that Philip baptized the Eunuch after they were both gone down into the water? When this is considered, and replied to, your next paragraph will, perhaps, require an answer. 'Till then, it is unnecessary.

But on the following one †, I ask leave to enquire, where do you read that "Saul was baptized in the house of Judas," or, that "the kinsmen and friends of Cornelius were baptized in his house?" This, Sir, is the invention of man, not the truth of God. But if it were asserted in scripture, you certainly are sensible it could be no proof that these persons were not immersed. You must know that private baths, as well as public ones, were so common among the Jews, and Gentiles too ‡, that it is a great pity you should so far debase yourself, both in point of learning and probity, as to talk of there not being "a tub in either of their houses."—With the

* See *Acts* viii. 38, 39. † Page 11.

‡ "It is strange that the use of bathing, as a part of diet, is left. With the Romans and Grecians, it was as usual as eating or sleeping." Lord *Bacon's Nat. Hist.* cent. viii. experiment 740. See also *Humble Essay*, p. 26, and the notes there.

like ungrounded assurance, you intimate that the jailor and his family were baptized in his house, without the least warrant from the sacred text; nay, even though the text mentions their going into his house, after the ordinance was administered.—Much like the former is your next argument from *Acts ii. 41* *. It is not said those three thousand were “all baptized in one day.”—If it were, there is no good reason to believe they were “all baptized by the twelve Apostles,” since the seventy disciples, who were preachers, and who baptized at other times, were then at Jerusalem.—And had even this been the case, where is the impossibility, in a place so full of baths, pools, and lavers, as Jerusalem was, of one man baptizing 250 persons in a day’s time. Men have often performed much harder tasks than this would have been; and pray, where is the great difference, as to time, between immersion and sprinkling?

If you can give any scripture proof that the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, or the pouring down of the Holy Ghost are alluded to, and represented in the mode of baptism, your next two paragraphs shall be attended to; till then, the considerate reader will think a reply to them unnecessary. By what mode of argument will you prove, Sir, that verse 13, of *Heb. ix.* is an explication of verse 10? Unless this is proved, (which will not, I think,

easy, however confidently asserted,) it will still be most natural to explain *divers washings*, (Gr. baptisms) as refering to the various bathings of priests, levites and people, and the different ends and purposes of such bathings, as they are explained by *Spencer*, *Grotius*, *Whitby* and others*. These few brief hints may, I think, be sufficient, as to what is material in the first part of your *Summary*. How you may approve of them, I cannot tell. Be that as it will, I wish every needful blessing to attend you, as a man, and as a minister, and am,

Reverend Sir,

Your ready servant,

Hirst,

for Jesus' sake.

July 4, 1777.

DAN TAYLOR.

* Vide *Spencer* de Legibus Hebræorum, v. ii. p. 1004. quarto edit. *Grotius* and *Whitby* in loc, and *Poli Synopsis*, in loc.

LETTER II.

Reverend SIR,

THAT baptism is to be administered to such as are converted—to christianity I have the pleasure to agree with you in believing and asserting; but that it ought to be administered “to the infant offspring of Christian believers*.” I cannot see how to grant, without contradicting the word of truth. My reasons are given more at large in the *Humble Essay*, to which I venture again to refer the reader, and shall here only take notice of what is advanced in your *Summary*, and not particularly considered there.

When Christian parents “dedicate their children,” or whatever they possess, “to God,” in a scriptural manner, he certainly will “graciously accept of such dedication;” but how this can have any relation to baptism, unless he have appointed that they shall be dedicated to him in that ordinance, I confess I am not able to imagine.—That the children of believers may and do enjoy some blessings in consequence of their parents faith, I will not deny; but neither does this seem to have connection with that sacred institution.

I wish, Sir, that you would explain to us a little more clearly what you suppose that covenant is which the blessed God makes with believers, and in what sense, and how far, he makes the same covenant with their infant-offspring. 'Till this be done, all dispute about it with respect to baptism, seems to me like throwing dust in the air to prevent persons discerning the plain path in which they ought to walk. Having, however, elsewhere said what I think needful on the subject*, I here only add, that it is very certain neither covenants nor any thing else besides the divine appointment, can lay a proper foundation for determining who are the subjects of baptism,—Another question I trust you will permit me to ask: How can it be made appear that those who baptize their infants “devote or dedicate them to God,” more than those who do not†? The compassion which Jesus manifested to children is evident, and it is sweet and delightful to think of it. It is also very certain (and O, that it were more seriously thought of!) that none can enter into the kingdom of Heaven who are not born again. Nor am I at present inclined to dispute whether infants “are capable of” the new-birth, in the scripture-sense of that phrase; because that question seems to me to have no connection with the subjects of baptism, which you call “the appointed sign

* See Humble Essay, p. 47, &c.

† See p. 16, &c.

“ of it*,” (*i. e.* of the new birth). But I should be glad to be informed in *what sense* you understand that baptism is a “ sign of “ the new birth.” It may then be considered whether infants are capable of attending to that ordinance in a scripture way or not. By the bye, however, the question is not what infants are capable of, but whether our Lord has authorised us to baptize them. If he have, they are certainly “ proper subjects” of baptism. Otherwise, it is certain they are not.

It is very amazing to me, and I think, to many others, that you should refer to *Rom. xi. 16*, as a passage which “ authorizes infant baptism.” Excuse me, Sir, in saying that I greatly wonder a minister of the gospel is not ashamed of a cause which stands in need of supports so far fetched, and so feeble as this and some others you make use of. Can you think that *branches* here, intends the infant offspring? Can any man imagine that it would be to the Apostle’s purpose to have any regard to baptism in this text? Where can the evidence be that the word “ holy” is “ used to express either a privilege, or a qualification for privileges?” or that one of these privileges is baptism, or a scripture-right to it. If these things cannot be proved, the reader is only amused with words. Your work and mine, Sir, is to instruct mankind,

and not to throw dust in their eyes, in order that we may play with them undiscerned.

I have elsewhere given my thoughts on 1 Cor. vii. 14. * But I here beg leave to ask, Sir, by what mode of argument you will make it appear that "the question upon which the Apostle gives his opinion was, whether, if a Christian man or woman married an unbeliever, their offspring were not to be considered and treated as a Christian offspring†?" Certainly, nothing is more clear from the Apostle's reasoning, than that this is not the question. Your remark upon this text, that "Paul pronounces the children of unbelievers unclean, and those of believers holy," is also a strange and unaccountable oversight. If words have any meaning, Paul pronounces those children *holy*, one of whose parents is sanctified by the other, even though one parent still continue an unbeliever.

As my thoughts on circumcision, the Abrahamic covenant, &c. are given also in the *Humble Essay*‡, I pass this over here. Only I must say, it is somewhat remarkable that you have not given us *all* the promises of God to Abraham. Why, Sir, did you pick out the 7th verse of *Gen. xvii.* || and omit the 6th and 8th? Had you given us a full account of this covenant, the reader might have judged for himself at first sight, whether the

* See *Humble Essay*, p 62—73.

† Page 18.

‡ See *Humble Essay*, p. 44, &c.
read *Gen. xvii.* 5—10.

|| Page 19.

Abrahamic covenant, and the covenant of grace be *the same*. We may, however, appeal to your own expressions, even when you are shewing the *sameness* of these two covenants. "The land of Canaan promised in one, was a type of a better country, viz. a heavenly one promised in the other*." Now, my good Sir, is the type and antitype the same? Is Canaan the same with Heaven? And can that be the same covenant which promises only an earthly Canaan with that which promises an heavenly one? Consequently, must it not be a great absurdity to argue the practice of infant baptism from that of circumcision? "The institutions and privileges of the Mosaic ritual were national and temporary, but the covenant of grace made with believers in Christ, is personal and everlasting." Here, again, Sir, I have the great pleasure of agreeing with you. But then, were not these "institutions and privileges of the Mosaic ritual" included in the Abrahamic covenant? And was not circumcision one of these institutions? Can circumcision then be properly said to belong to the covenant of grace? The plain truth is, spiritual and eternal blessings were promised to Abraham as a believer; yet they were not derived to all his natural posterity, but are enjoyed to the end of time by all true believers; who are therefore called the child-

ren of Abraham*. Now these promises and circumcision were not necessarily connected. Many were circumcised who had never any interest in these promises, nor were supposed to have. Otherwise all the carnal Jews, as they were circumcised, would have been saved; which, surely, no man in his senses will assert. It must therefore be a glaring impropriety to speak of circumcision as "a seal of the covenant of grace." From these considerations it is evident that the reasonings in the 22d page of your *Summary* are totally without foundation.

That "baptism comes in the room of circumcision" can never be proved. It is never intimated in scripture. There are many convincing arguments against it†, which, if you think it practicable, I wish you would undertake to answer. It cannot be that the Apostle "speaks of baptism as the circumcision of Christ, *Col. ii. 11.* ‡ unless baptism be administered *without hands*. The resemblance you mention between baptism and circumcision evidently fails ||. There is no place of scripture where baptism is appointed to be administered "to those who were converted, and to their households." It is granted that the Apostles did, in some instances, baptize households. But those very instances shew

* See *Rom. iv. 13, 14, 16, 24. Gal. iii. 29.*

† See *Humble Essay, p. 44, 45, 46. Dr. Stennett's Letters, No. ix.*

‡ Page 23.

|| Page 23.

that

that such households were converted; or, at least, the accounts of them make it very probable.—The circumcised Jew, and baptized Christian were not “taught to look upon” themselves as separated from the world, as “holy unto the Lord” in the *same sense*, as must be evident to every reader of the Bible. Nor was circumcision “a token of the covenant of grace” to infants, as we have shewn above. In these things, Sir, you have taken for granted what you ought to prove; but the proof is beyond the power of any man living. My thoughts on the commission, are given in another place*.

If any of the baptists object, as you say “it is objected, that children are not expressly mentioned in these instructions of our Lord to his ministers,” I confess I think it is weak in those baptists. But I know of no baptists who mention this as an argument sufficient to invalidate the authority upon which this practice is founded. It is, indeed, asserted on their side, and granted on the opposite side, that there is no express mention of it in our Lord’s instructions. But if any thing in those instructions will fairly extend to infants, we ought to dispute against it no longer. But we insist upon it that the practice is contrary to the clear and obvious meaning of those instructions; and there is not one just rule of interpretation by which

* Humble Essay, p. 36, &c.

they can be proved to be included in those instructions. You must be sensible to argue from hence, that we have no authority to "baptize women, or even men," because "neither are expressly mentioned in the command," is very unfair. You know "we must baptize somebody. You and all men will allow that the commission authorizes the baptism of believers; that we read expressly of believers being baptized in obedience to the commission, and these believers are expressly said to be *both men and women**. Now, Sir, if you or any other man, can produce this evidence in favor of infant baptism, we give up the point. But you are conscious, all considerate men are conscious that this evidence cannot be produced in favor of infant baptism. My thoughts on what your next paragraph contains are given elsewhere†. As to what you say on *Acts* ii. 38, 39. it is sufficient to observe here, that you and all men of understanding must allow, that the English word *children* and the Greek word *τεκνους*, signify *posterity*; and that the promise is so limited to those whom *God shall call*, that infants cannot be included: and then, that this limitation must be admitted, otherwise all the posterity of believing Abraham would be saved, which is an absurdity that no man can admit, but one who is *non compos mentis*. By the bye, however, if your

* See *Acts* viii. xviii. &c. † Humble Essay, p. 43, 44.

sense of the text were established, it is impossible that the practice of infant baptism should be vindicated from it.—Nor does this infer any limitation of saving spiritual “privileges” under the gospel, more than under the “law*.” Such privileges never were indiscriminately granted to the children of believers, either under the law, or the gospel, as is evident from what is observed above. Your distinction between *is*, *was*, and *shall be*, is unnecessary and useless upon this explication of the text.

As to the *inutility* or *hurtfulness* of infant baptism, canvassed with a view to establish or refute the notion of it's being of divine authority†, I look upon these topics to open a field for useless squabble, in which he who has the most fruitful invention will probably come off conqueror. If the practice be of divine authority, it is certainly useful. If not, it must be unprofitable, and even hurtful.—That “Christ has no where com-

* Page 26.

† I speak thus because I freely grant, that when a practice is once shewn to be unscriptural, the hurtfulness of it may properly be demonstrated, in order to expose the silly notion of its being a matter of indifference, and to deter weak persons from giving into it. In this view, I wish success to attend every judicious attempt to demonstrate the hurtfulness of *infant baptism*, which is, I am confident, one of the most pernicious human traditions, that ever proceeded from the corrupt heart of man, or deformed the beautiful order of a gospel church.

“manded

"manded infant baptism," is certainly a strong objection against it, if it be considered as a positive institution of Christianity; because if Christ have not commanded it, it is not his institution; and consequently it is an invention of men. But that Jesus should say, "in so many words, Let infants be baptized," is not necessary, if it can be proved that the commission which he gave his Apostles, plainly extends to infants; or that they certainly baptized infants in obedience to that commission. But if one or the other of these cannot be proved, it is most certain that the practice has no foundation in scripture.

That those scriptural expressions in which faith and repentance are required previous to baptism, "are little to the purpose for which they are produced*," ought to be proved as well as asserted. You very truly say, that "faith and repentance are required of adult-converts from heathenism, &c." You are right also in saying, "that the Apostles baptized adults is very certain;" and if they required faith and repentance by divine authority of these adults, it is very natural to conclude that they did not afterwards baptize their children," unless some passage of scripture can be produced by which they were authorised to require faith and repentance of these adult converts, and to baptize

their children without such requirement; and such a passage cannot be produced. You must certainly be out in attempting to invalidate this kind of reasoning by saying, "We might with equal reason say that children were not circumcised because their parents were." Why, my good Sir, certainly no one is silly enough to reason thus; "Children were not baptized because their parents were." Children might be baptized, and their parents too, if the Lord had commanded it. And you know it is expressly recorded in scripture, that children were circumcised, but it is not recorded there that children were baptized. Besides, we never read, that I know of, that either faith or repentance was required of those adults who were circumcised. But you yourself grant that faith and repentance were required of adult converts in order to baptism. So that you see, the cases are quite different.

I think your remarks upon laws, customs, legacy, and deeds of gift, are much more fanciful than solid. It is granted, "a testator says in his will, I give this estate to such a one and his heirs*;" and this establishes the title of the heirs to the estate. But then, the blessed God never says, "Let such persons be baptized and their children." If this were said, the title of children to the ordinance of baptism, would be equally clear

and firm. Nor does the Lord ever "say to
 "his people" with respect to spiritual and
 eternal happiness, "I will be a God to you,
 "and your seed." I will venture to affirm,
 Sir, though you hang so much upon it, that
 the sentiment itself, and every attempt to
 establish it, are big with absurdity, and with
 mischief to the souls of men. And yet, if
 this sentiment could be established as it can-
 not, it would never furnish out a substantial
 argument in favor of infant baptism. "If
 "faith and repentance had been indispensable
 "pre-requisites to baptism." Nay, my dear
 Sir, you have just now granted that "they
 "were pre-requisites in adult-converts." And
 if this was of divine authority, as I believe
 no one will deny, then they were certainly
indispensable pre-requisites. But if they were,
 "our Lord himself on one account, and Si-
 "mon on another, would have been im-
 "proper subjects for the ordinance." Our
 Lord, you know, was the great institutor
 and pattern of the ordinance, and therefore
 out of the question. You will grant it was
 proper that he should be our example in the
 other institution, the Lord's supper. Yet I
 trust, you will not deny that faith and re-
 pentance are indispensable pre-requisites to
 that ordinance. Suppose Simon was an im-
 proper subject; that proves nothing. He
 appeared to be a proper one when the ordi-
 nance was administered; and many others
 have been admitted to both ordinances upon

a credible evidence of faith and repentance, who have afterwards manifested themselves to be very different to what they appeared at first.

If you, or any other can make it appear that our Saviour did really authorize his Apostles to baptize any without faith and repentance, or that the Apostles did baptize any whom they knew to be without, your practice will then appear to have some foundation, and your 31st page will demand our attention. Till then we must pass it by. "Propriety, capacity, signs, tokens, &c." with regard to the foundation of the ordinance now in question, have nothing to do with scripture; and therefore we have nothing to do with them.

You ask, "Has not baptism been generally administered to children in the several ages of the church*." I answer, no, Sir, it has not. Not in the first or second ages of the church. No man ever proved, or will ever be able to prove that it has†. As to Dr. *Lightfoot's* reason for the silence of scripture, respecting infant-baptism, I pass it over here, having considered the argument from profane baptism elsewhere‡.

It is evident the households you mention do not supply one single instance of infant-bap-

* Page 31.

† See, on this subject, *Humble Essay*, p. 73, &c. *Dr. Stennett's Letters*, v. 2. No. 15. and others.

‡ See *Humble Essay*, p. 51, &c.

tism, or one fair argument to support the practice of it, not even with your ingenious management of what is related concerning them. On the household of Lydia, you justly observe, "we read nothing of the faith or ages, (*age* rather) of any one of her family." How then, my good Sir, will you prove there were infants in it? If you cannot do this, it cannot be imagined to afford an argument in favor of infant baptism. You must know there are multitudes of households in which are no infants, and every circumstance in the history of Lydia and her household, renders it probable that her's was one of this kind. Equally void of evidence in your favor, is the household of Stephanas, 1 Cor. i. 16. So also is that of the Jailor, even with your extraordinary criticism upon it. By what method of argument, or rules of grammar or criticism, Sir, do you disprove the common translation of *παιδοι*, *with all his house*; and by what authority do you support the contrary one, *in (or over) all his house*; in opposition to the generality of the best critics and commentators? And yet, could you support this translation, and disprove the other, to which I hope, you will never pretend, yet even in that case, you have no evidence that any infants were in the Jailor's family, and consequently no foundation for the practice of infant baptism. Is it not then very strange, Sir, that you should oppose Dr. *Lighfoot*, and so many other pœdobaptists,

pœdobaptists, by asserting that “the New
 “ Testament is not silent upon this head?”
 Pray, Sir, where is the passage in which in-
 fant baptism is mentioned? Multitudes, I
 am persuaded, even of pœdobaptists, must
 be ashamed of such an assertion as this. I will
 conclude the argument by a few words from
 two or three writers out of many in proof of
 what I say, who are of your own side,
 strange as it is to think of!

“ Pœdobaptism, in the two first centu-
 “ ries after Christ, was unknown, but in
 “ the third and fourth was approved of by
 “ a few, began to prevail in the fifth and
 “ subsequent ages; and therefore this rite is
 “ indeed observed by us as an ancient cus-
 “ tom, but not as an apostolical tradition.”—
Curcellæus, Differt. Secund. de peccat. orig.
 § 56.

“ In the two first ages no one received bap-
 “ tism, unless he who, having been instruct-
 “ ed in the faith, and imbued with the doc-
 “ trine of Christ, was able to testify that he
 “ believed.”—*Suicer*. Thesaur. Eccl. sub
 voce Ευαγγ.

“ None were baptized of old, but those
 “ who were of age, who not only understood
 “ what the mystery of the water meant, but
 “ desired the same.”—*Ludovicus Vives*,
 Comment in August. Lib. i. cap. 27.

“ It is against the perpetual analogy of
 “ Christ’s doctrine to baptize infants; for
 “ besides that Christ never gave any precept

“ to baptize them, nor ever himself, nor
 “ his Apostles, that appears, did baptize
 “ any of them,—all that either he or his
 “ Apostles said concerning it, requires such
 “ previous dispositions to baptism, of which
 “ infants are not capable, and these are
 “ faith and repentance.”—Bp. Taylor on
 Proph. p. 239.

You know, Sir, and every man of reading knows, that these are but a very few out of many paedobaptists, who freely confess that they can find no authority for, or account of, infant baptism in the scriptures. I shall only refer to one more, who is yet living; an author whom I well know, and whom I have long esteemed. His words are these, speaking of the apostolic times, and practice. “ Nor was
 “ *baptism* itself the first declaration of their
 “ being Christians, for *none* was admitted to
 “ *baptism*, much less to the *supper of the*
 “ *Lord*, without a previous confession of
 “ faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as is manifest in the instance of *Philip* and the *Eunuch*, *Cornelius* the Gentile, the *Sailor*, &c.”
 —Rev. Mr. T. Knight, Amyntas and Philetus, p. 210, 211.

I cannot but think, Sir, that these authors, were they all now living, would smile at a man who should assert that “ the New Testament is not silent upon this head,” infant-baptism. Every man who has carefully read the New Testament, if he have any tenderness of conscience, or regard for truth, must confess

confess, I apprehend, that it knows nothing about the matter. It does not seem to have come into the thoughts of any person concerned in it, nor of any person that lived till a considerable time after it was finished.

I ask your pardon, Sir, if I presume so far as to offer you a word or two of advice, which, if attended to, will, I think, be of service to yourself and your readers, should you think proper to resume this controversy, or to take up any other. I give it so far as I know, with due respect to your person and character.

I advise you then, my dear Sir, to read the passages of scripture carefully over, which relate to the subject you are upon: and try to be impartial, and to divest yourself of prejudice. Consider yourself in the sight of that God who trieth the reins and heart, and to whom we must quickly give an account of all our thoughts, words and works.

Do not be positive in asserting without evidence, nor take things for granted without proof; especially the things which you know are denied by your opponents. This often unnecessarily prolongs the debate, and excites a disposition, not the most happy, or most honourable to the Christian character; and is, in short, unfair, and unworthy a minister of Jesus Christ.

Do not lead your readers to imagine that your opponents say such things as you know they do not say; nor represent your adversaries knowingly,

knowingly, in an unjust light. Make *Matt.*
 vii. 12. Your rule in your treatment of o-
 thers. This is honourable and like a man.
 Do not confound the argument, and darken
 the judgment by noise and declamation, or
 far-fetched remarks; nor put off your read-
 ers with possibilities, or even probabilities, in
 the place of certainty and positive evidence;
 nor impose upon the ignorant with unmean-
 ing or equivocal phrases. But let the world
 see that you are willing to be thoroughly
 known, and esteem it an honor to be set
 right, if you are wrong.

You see, my good Sir, I use the same fa-
 miliarity I would do if I had the honor, and
 the great pleasure of your company in my own
 parlour. I have imagined, however, that
 these advices were very needful, while I have
 run over your *Summary*; though to avoid of-
 fence, I have seldom seemed to observe it.
 May you, and may I, and may all who bear
 the sacred character of ministers, be daily
 learning more and more, to imitate the blessed
 Jesus, our only hope, and to be more and
 more his meek and upright followers, under
 the enlivening consideration that he spilled
 for us his precious blood, and hath left us
 an example, that we should follow his steps!
 This is the constant prayer of,

Reverend and dear Sir,

Your affectionate brother,

And ready servant, for Jesus' sake;

DAN TAYLOR,

First, in Wadsworth. X
 July 12, 1777.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THESE LETTERS were designed to be stitched together with a second Edition of the *Humble Essay* ON CHRISTIAN BAPTISM; and most of the Copies of them were so; only a few are sold separate, for the Advantage of those who have yet the first Edition of the *Humble Essay*.



E R R A T A.

Page 8, note, l. 11, read Stennett's. P. 9. l. 16 and 23, r. Is it. P. 10. l. 11, r. *עָשָׂה* P. 17. l. 1, r. *be easy*. P. 21. l. 9. dele not. P. 30. l. 27, r. profelyte.

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